



Investigating the factors affecting job stress, and its relationship with employees' job satisfaction in Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences, Iran, in year 2016

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Abstract

Original Article

BACKGROUND: The phenomenon of stress encounters all humans during their life time. Stress or psychological stress may be benign or malignant; the stress that make someone achieve goals is benign. If the stress exceeds its capacity, it becomes malignant stress, and causes psychosomatic complications. Research findings have shown that job stress can cause job dissatisfaction among employees. The purpose of this study was to investigate the job stress factors, and its relationship with job satisfaction among the staff members in Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences, Iran.

METHODS: In order to implement the plan, a list of all employees in Kurdistan University at Medical Sciences was obtained from the campus staff. Subsequently, a questionnaire containing three main sections (demographic information, job stress, and job satisfaction survey) was filed up for each staff member. So that the employee referred to the workplace, and after justification, received a questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected, and after an initial review (in terms of completeness), the data were analyzed using SPSS software.

RESULTS: There was no significant relationship between age and work experience with satisfaction and stress. However, there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and gender. The level of job satisfaction among the participants with associate degree was less than three other levels. Levels of stress differed in associate and undergraduate degrees, with doctoral and postgraduate degrees. There was no significant relationship between satisfaction and stress with marital status.

CONCLUSION: Based on the findings, it is possible to use appropriate methods and strategies to reduce stressful occupational factors among staff, especially staff with associate degree, and to pick up the level of job satisfaction at the individual and eventually organizational level.

KEYWORDS: Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Personnel, Iran

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Introduction

The old word, distress, has been transformed into the word stress due to the removal and everyday use of the word stress.¹ In Persian,

the word mental pressure has been used to equalize the stress that is not consistent with the exact meaning of stress. The concept of stress during the process of transformation the more intense it is, the less accurate it is. Nowadays, people are affected by stress when facing any kind of tiredness or anger.² Everyone experience much mental pressure

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throughout their lives. From a simple farmer to a manager at high levels of human management throughout history, they have experienced mental pressure and stress.³ According to the definition given by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, emotional and mental pressure-related reactions appear, when the job requirements are not in line with the capacities, needs, or resources of the existing employee or worker.⁴ Job-related stress can be a combination of stressors, and those related to the job situation, which most people agree on is stressful.⁵

Employees are one of the groups that have job stress. Moore believes that the stressor conditions deriving from the organization's structure, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and labor pressure, will lead to negative work-related conditions in the absence of positive conditions in the workplace.⁶ Occupation is one of the main causes of stress in peoples' lives. In jobs where more human communication is concerned, stress is also higher. Job stress is one of the mental pressures that endanger peoples' health by causing behavioral, psychological, and physical symptoms. On the other hand, these pressures and stresses can affect organizational goals by reducing individual performance.⁷

Job satisfaction is one of the most important components of health promotion and life satisfaction. Job satisfaction in the field of medical services has always been of interest to researchers, since the workforce in this area ensures the health of the community. The quality and quantity of work in this area differ with its factory concept, which is a desirable quality and high quantity with minimal cost, and in the shortest time. Damage to the physical and mental health of the expert manpower with the goal of cost savings, is by no means justifiable.

The phenomenon of stress or nerve pressure is one of the most acute issues in today's organizations, which endangers the physical and mental health of the workforce, and has put a

heavy cost on organizations; a group of experts in organizational behavior, called occupational (job) stress, as a common disease of the century. Perhaps, indeed, our era is the age of stress in which human is more exposed to stressors than ever before, and he/she has surrounded him/herself with many problems. Employees spend a lot of hours at work. Job dissatisfaction and the consequent stress within a few years makes them sick persons. Therefore, experts recommend managers to pay attention to stress in the workplace. They can also remove stressors from the workplace using the preventive methods.⁵

Materials and Methods

To implement the plan, a list of all the staff working in the campus complex of the Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences, Sanandaj, Iran, was taken from the campus staff department, and then a questionnaire containing three main sections (demographic information, job stress assessment, and job satisfaction survey) was filed for each staff member individually, and was completed individually. As such, the person referred to the workplace and, after justification, received a questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected, and after an initial review (in terms of completeness), the data were analyzed using SPSS software (version 16, SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

To assess the job satisfaction, a standard sky doc questionnaire was used, each of which was used in five indexes: 1. Occupational safety, 2. Use of skills, 3. Salaries and benefits, 4. Work environment relationships, and 5. Purposefulness and understanding of the employees of their goals.

Moreover, the Gray-Taft and Anderson Nurses Stress Scale was used that designed in 7 sections, including: 1. Role ambiguity, 2. Role conflict, 3. Heavy role playing, 4. Light role playing, 5. Work rate, 6. Repetitive work, and 7. Job stress.

Table 1. Abundance distribution table of main variables

	Completely agree	Agree	No comments	Disagree	Completely disagree
Working hours	21 (7.9)	118 (44.2)	45 (16.9)	53 (19.8)	30 (11.2)
Hourly leave rules	22 (8.4)	131 (50.0)	40 (15.3)	44 (16.8)	25 (9.5)
Ventilation	28 (10.7)	123 (46.9)	38 (14.5)	38 (14.5)	35 (13.4)
Water closets (WCs)	32 (12.3)	95 (36.6)	39 (15.0)	51 (19.6)	43 (16.5)
Division of labor among the employees	17 (6.5)	89 (34.2)	54 (20.8)	47 (18.1)	53 (20.4)
Rules of organizational posts	22 (8.4)	66 (25.1)	62 (23.6)	65 (24.7)	48 (18.2)

The amounts are as number (percent).

In addition, interviews were conducted among several groups of university campus staffers who, as a result of this interview, added 6 new variables to variables including 1. Working time, 2. Hourly leave rules, 3. Ventilation, 4. Water closets (WCs), 5. Division of labor between employees, and 6. The rules of the organizational posts, which were mentioned at the end of the questionnaire.

Results

300 staff of Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences were enrolled the study, from which 162 (54%) were women and 138 (46%) were men. Among the sample, 65 (21.7%) were single, 214 (71.3%) were married, and 21 (7%) did not express their status.

The mean age of participants was 38.92 years with a standard deviation of 8.8 years, the minimum age is 20 and the maximum age is 58 years. The average work experience of them was 13.75 years with a standard deviation of 9.00 years. The maximum working experience was 30 years, and the minimum was 1 year.

The level of education was classified into four groups. There were 37 participants (12.3%) with associate degree, 138 (46%) with undergraduate degree, 105 (35%) with postgraduate degree, and 15 (5%) with doctoral degree; 5 people did not express their education level.

Among the participants, 139 people (52.1%) agreed with the working hours and 83 (31.0%) disagreed. 153 people (58.4%) agreed with the hourly leave rules, and 69 people (26.3%) disagreed. Moreover, 151 (57.6%) were in favor of their own ventilation system, and 73 people (27.9%) expressed dissatisfaction. 127 people (48.9%) expressed satisfaction with the status of their WCs, and 94 (36.1%) expressed dissatisfaction. 106 people (40.7%) agreed to division of labor among the employees, and 100 (38.5%) disagreed. 88 people (33.5%) agreed with the rules of organizational posts, and 113 (42.9%) disagreed (Table 1).

The results of t-test for two independent samples showed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and gender; but there was no significant relationship between job stress and gender (Table 2).

Table 2. The relationship between job satisfaction and job stress levels based on gender among the studied population using independent samples t-test

Variable	Gender	Mean + SD	Magnitude of statistic	P
Job satisfaction	Women	87.98 ± 11.16	-2.022	0.043
	Men	90.52 ± 10.39		
Job stress	Women	92.55 ± 13.69	-0.220	0.089
	Men	92.97 ± 16.20		

SD: Standard deviation

Table 3. The comparison of the job satisfaction and stress levels based on marital status among the studied population using independent samples t-test

Variable		Average \pm SD	Magnitude of statistic	P
Job satisfaction	Single	91.00 \pm 12.50	1.283	0.201
	Married	89.00 \pm 10.11		
Job stress	Single	95.98 \pm 17.98	1.812	0.071
	Married	92.19 \pm 13.41		

SD: Standard deviation

ANOVA test showed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and job stress with education level. Tukey's follow-up test showed that job stress in people with an undergraduate degree was different from that of two postgraduate and doctoral degrees (Magnitude of statistic = 8.075; $P < 0.001$), and had no difference with associate degree. There was no difference between postgraduate and doctoral degrees in terms of job stress. Job Satisfaction among those with associate degree significantly was less than three other levels (Magnitude of statistic = 6.692; $P < 0.001$).

The results of test for two independent samples showed no significant relationship between job satisfaction and stress with marital status (Table 3).

There was no significant relationship between the age and work experience with satisfaction and stress (Table 4).

There was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and stress ($P < 0.001$). This relationship was moderate and in the positive direction (Pearson coefficient = 0.404), that was, by changing the degree of satisfaction, the level of stress also changes in the same direction.

Among the sample, people with low and moderate job satisfaction (unhappy) were 95 (57.2%) women and 71 (42.8%) men; and among those who had job satisfaction, 67 persons (50.4%) were women and 66 (49.6%) were men.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting job stress and its relationship with job satisfaction among the staff in Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences. The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and gender. Among those with a moderate and low job satisfaction, 95 people (57.2%) were women and 71 (42.8%) were men, which indicated that among the women, job satisfaction was lower than men. Hashemzadeh et al. findings showed that overall job stress was higher in women; and this could be the result of a conflict between job responsibilities and family responsibilities. Moreover, biological conditions, and social and cultural status could be effective in this case.⁸

Table 4. The relationship between job stress and job satisfaction with age and work experience

Variable		Job stress	Job satisfaction	Work experience	Age
Age	Coefficient	0.073	-0.030	0.835	1
	Correlation				
Work experience	Amount	0.212	0.604	0.000	0.835
	Coefficient	0.029	-0.043		
Job satisfaction	Correlation		1		-0.030
	Amount	0.634	0.478		
Job stress	Coefficient	0.404		-0.043	0.604
	Correlation		1		
Job stress	Amount	0.000		0.478	0.073
	Coefficient		0.404	0.029	
Job stress	Correlation	1			0.212
	Amount		0.000	0.634	

Out of the 7 components of job stress (working hours, hourly leave regulations, ventilation, WCs status, division of labor between employees, and rules on organizational posts), the highest satisfaction was related to the rules of the time-out leave, and the subsequent ventilation. The lowest satisfaction was with organizational divisions (25%), indicating that the type of division of organizational posts was one of the factors affecting job stress, ultimately affecting job satisfaction. Moreover, the division of labor between employees was another factor affecting occupational stress. Bartram *et al.* in their research found a significant relationship between stress and job satisfaction among the nurses. They found that some aspects of job stress such as inadequacy, role incompatibility, and role ambiguity had negative relationship with job satisfaction; so that increasing the severity of these variables reduced job satisfaction.⁹

There was no significant relationship between age and work experience with satisfaction and stress. These findings are not consistent with the findings of Ebadi *et al.*¹⁰ who surveyed job satisfaction among general practitioners that had office in Tehran City, Iran. The difference may be due to the fact that older general practitioners are more satisfied with their job, due to having a better job position, and relative higher welfare. In addition, it should be noted that our research targeted different occupational groups with different educational levels, while Ebadi *et al.*¹⁰ focused on general practitioners. Therefore, it seems that the two factors of job differences and the level of education have led to mismatches of finding of the two researches.

In this study, there was not a significant relationship between job satisfaction and job stress with demographic characteristics, including marital status and age; but there was a significant relationship between the level of education with job satisfaction and job stress.

In the studies by Hasanzadeh *et al.*¹¹ and Daniali *et al.*,¹² the finding about marital status were consistent with the present study.

Job stress was different among the people with postgraduate education and doctoral degrees compared to those with undergraduate and associate degrees; but, it was not different between the two undergraduate and associate degrees. Moreover, job satisfaction among the people with associate degree was less than the other three levels. However, in relation to the level of education, the findings of Hasanzadeh *et al.*¹¹ and Daniali *et al.*,¹² are in inconsistency with our research; the reason would be the difference between occupation and workplaces in these studies.

Conclusion

As noted, people with undergraduate degrees are more likely to be job stressed than postgraduate and doctorate degrees, and job satisfaction is lower among this group. It is better to think about the ways to improve the workplace conditions, and to enjoy working, and reduce the stressors, especially for undergraduate and lower levels degrees, which make up a large percentage of employees in this sector.

Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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